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## SPECIALIST MANAGEMENT & SALES TRAINING FOR THE OFFICE PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

### P1 TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT LTD

■ Member of the P1 Group

#### New Business - Making an Impact

##### The Difference between 'I Know' and 'I Think'

Regular visitors to this article may recall our March article on new business – This Time It's Personal. We looked at the ways in which you could develop your new business approach and effectively tailor your sales proposition to the client's needs. But that really is only part of it. It's also might not be the hardest part of the new business process either. Very often our workshop delegates cite the challenge of actually getting the opportunity to pitch as being the hardest part. Once 'in' the opportunity to establish rapport is presented and the foundations of a relationship are formed. Getting the 'in' is the real challenge for most.

A recent course attendee said to me 'I wouldn't be able to cold-call you and sell you any FM products as I don't know anything about that product category'. A fair comment. Product and/or service confidence is very important to any sales person. "But what if, when you called, unbeknown to you, I actually NEEDED a product from that category? What if my existing supplier had just gone bust? Changed my account manager? Was on stop with THEIR supplier? Out of stock? Could you HELP me then?" I asked.

"Yes, of course I can!" was the response. "That's different"

The delegate was understandably more confident now as the issue was no longer about trying to sell me something I might not want but actually trying to help me address a *need*. The dynamic had changed. There was less pressure to 'sell' and total emphasis on providing a service to a client in *need*.

So what can be learnt from this? Well, a number of things really. Firstly, a sale is about, and always has been about, satisfying a need. When we are presented with a 'need' we can sell somebody something that satisfies that need to the best of our ability. Elementary stuff but often overlooked. In the absence of a need we have to create a need. Or identify a need that can be indirectly satisfied with what our offering does.

For example, many office products dealers will lead with cost-savings and efficiencies as their proposition. That's fine of course but what does that actually DO for the client. What 'need' will it satisfy? If I can save a company £20,000 per annum on their office supplies what part of their business will benefit from that? What need or needs do they have? If my savings mean they can invest elsewhere that's the 'need' I've satisfied. That's what I'm selling.

The second thing we learn, and perhaps the most valuable lesson, is the confidence we gain as sales people once we KNOW we have the ability to fulfil a useful purpose and satisfy *a need*. Allow me to explain.

A popular feature of our sales workshops is 'The Difference between I Think and I know'.

Think about it in its basic form. 'I Think' implies there is work to be done by somebody – that somebody probably being the prospect themselves. 'I Think' has got scattergun approach written all over it. 'I, the target, am just one of many you are trying your luck with today' it says. 'I Know' however says that works been done and there is a true purpose for your call. You are confident. 'I think I can save you money/ improve efficiencies, etc' says just that – I DON'T KNOW! It says 'I'm going to need some of your time to get me to a position to decide whether I can or I can't'. Now if you are lucky and there is a NEED for what you THINK you can do then you may well be met with a favourable response. But often there is not an immediate NEED. Or that need isn't clear. More often than not the target is quite happy thank you with what they have in place. There may be needs elsewhere in the business but not in your area. They can see no NEED for helping you find out if you can do what you THINK you can do.

The start point for me then is always PLEASE do not make that first all important call to your target prospect if all you can say is 'I think.....' Stop yourself doing it. Arm yourself with at least one 'I know...'

"I know I can save you X"

"I know I can improve on your current provider's service"

"I know I can make your life easier for you"

"I know I have something that you will benefit from"

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But how do you *know*? What evidence have you got? How do you get to the 'I Know' stage in the first place? Research? Homework? Yep, afraid so. But it is worth it.

Examples of success in similar situations with other similar clients? Yep, that too. Anything that gives you confidence to say 'I know' instead of 'I think' is worth the effort.

And the more 'I knows' you get the better. It says to your prospect "I have done my homework and I am not wasting either of our time here". It implies you have made an investment of your time already so they don't have to. It says "I am confident we will both get a return on this investment of time I am asking you to commit to with me". It really does.

Where do you find this information then? It literally is all around you. Practically every business you can think of is trying to tell you about themselves; website, company brochures, local media. They have something to sell too. What about their competitors, the receptionist, other personnel in that company (in fact any other personnel than your targeted individual)? The trick is to arm yourself with as much info and knowledge before you make that all important first call. The Impact call. Give yourself confidence through knowledge.

So now, armed with your 'I knows' how do you make an impact? You can't say 'I know' straight away. What do you say first? How much time do you have? What do you need to cover? Well, in fact you have very little time to make that initial impression. About 12 seconds in fact. 15 at most. 15 seconds to make an impact. BUT you also have enough time to cover what you need. To stimulate your targeted prospect to continue to listen to you. In 15 seconds you need to cover 4 things – your name, your company name, at least one STATUS statement and, 'I know'.

A *status statement* is just that. It tells your target either your personal status or that of your company. If your company is the best/leading/largest/fastest growing/best recognised/most awarded company in X then that needs to be in there. If you are responsible on behalf of your business of finding companies like your prospect and attracting them to your company – that needs to be in there.

And then 'I know'. That needs to be in there as the fourth element. 15 seconds. Try it. It's widely known as an elevator pitch as, folklore has it, that's how long Rockefeller used to give his employees to convince him to grant them an extended audience with him – from reception on the ground floor to the top of the building in the elevator! If they made an impression, they got to carry on with their meeting.

The elevator pitch is a useful way to make the initial impact but it should be used ultimately to gain commitment of some kind. This is why the elevator pitch should always be followed by an open question or questions. It gives the target a chance to grant you further access or object to your call – either way you are on the first rung of the sales process.

"My name is.....I know I can save you £x thousand a year....would you like me to explain how?". If the answer is 'no' then it is either not a convenient time OR....you are potentially talking to the wrong person!

"My name is....I've been doing some researching on your business and I know I can save you....tell me, what will you or your business do with that money?"

However you choose to deliver the impact statement make it personal to you and as relevant to the target as possible. The fact is there is, as you've heard me say before, no magic pixie dust. The gaining of information before the impact call WILL give you confidence. IF you truly KNOW you can, and the person you have targeted really isn't interested, I guarantee somebody in that business will be – try them instead! But only if you really do KNOW. If you KNOW, you're convinced. If you're convinced then you will experience a far greater level of confidence in your pitch than if you THINK!

And when you do get through to that person –make use of your 15 seconds. Make your 15 seconds count.

Make an impact!

For more information please email direct to Sue at [enquiries@p1td.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@p1td.co.uk) or via our website: [www.p1td.co.uk](http://www.p1td.co.uk)